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STRONG INTEREST IN FIRST STEM CELL RESEARCH GRANTS

CIRM Receives 350 “Letters of Intent” for \$100 Million Program

SAN FRANCISCO, September 19, 2006 – The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) announced today that as many as 350 California scientists may apply for the Institute’s inaugural stem cell research grants, under its *Innovation in Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research* initiative.

In August, CIRM solicited applications for two grant programs – Scientific Excellence through Exploration and Development (SEED) Grants and Comprehensive Research Grants. The Institute anticipates awarding up to \$24 million to support as many as 30 SEED Grants over two years, and as much as \$80 million over four years for up to 25 Comprehensive Grants.

Researchers were required to submit letters of intent by September 15, if they plan to submit full grant applications. The Institute received approximately 280 letters of intent for SEED Grants and 70 for Comprehensive Grants. Following peer review, recipients will be selected in early 2007 by the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), the governing board for CIRM.

“We are quite excited about the strong response for our first research grants,” said Zach W. Hall, PhD, President and Chief Scientific Officer of CIRM. “It’s clear that California scientists are eager to get started. The excellent response ensures that we will have a vigorous, high quality program of human embryonic stem cell research in California.”

CIRM will empanel scientific experts from around the country to evaluate the grant applications, judge and score their scientific merit, and recommend applications that merit funding. To reduce the potential for conflicts of interest, none of the experts will be from California. The experts’ recommendations will be reviewed and considered by the ICOC, which is the final decision-making body for all CIRM grant awards.

SEED Grants are intended to bring new ideas and new investigators into the field of human embryonic stem cell (hESC) research. They offer an opportunity for investigators to carry out studies that may yield preliminary data or proof-of-principle results that could then be extended to full scale investigations. Comprehensive Research Grants will support mature, ongoing studies on hESCs by scientists with a record of accomplishment in the field. This is also an opportunity for investigators with well-developed expertise in hESC research or in a closely-related field to pursue new directions in hESCs based on current research.

These grants will be the first awarded by CIRM to fund stem cell research. They will be funded through a \$150 million loan from the state’s general fund, which was authorized by the Governor in July. In April, the Institute awarded \$12.1 million to 16 California institutions, to train 169 stem



cell scientists. Funding for the training grants was made possible by the sale of bond anticipation notes to six individuals and philanthropic organizations.

About CIRM

CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was approved by California voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.

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